THE NATION

MAY 23, 1959 . . 25

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# CHINA: the GHOST AT the SUMMIT

*Edgar Snow*

*THE 'SICK' COMMISSION*

# FCC and the NETWORKS

*Bernard Schwartz*

# KENTUCKY'S TRAGIC STRIKE

*Ron M. Linton*

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# LETTERS

## North Dakota and the Non-Informative AEC

*Dear Sirs*: I am glad that Walter Schneir in his letter printed in the May 9 issue of *The Nation* has called attention to the fact that North Dakota is the "hottest" spot in the country with respect to sr-90 in milk. As a resident of North Dakota for the past two years, I would like to answer his query as to whether information on sr-90 has been given to local officials and the public. The answer is a simple "no" as far as the public is concerned.

It was not until May, 1958, that North Dakotans learned, unofficially, of the heavy fallout in their state. They have an enterprising young reporter of the local paper to thank for the information. A year ago, Dr. J. L. Kulp of Columbia University visited North Dakota to arrange for human bone samples to be analyzed for sr-90. The reporter learned of the visit, and elicited from a reluctant Dr. Kulp the fact that milk in the town of Mandan, N.D., was the most heavily contaminated of any studied by the AEC. Subsequently, AEC officials told the Minneapolis *Tribune* that "the study was to be kept off the record. . . . Van Heuvelen [North Dakota State Director of Public Health] said Kulp had not informed him about the sampling of the Mandan milk."

As a result of these revelations, I undertook to find out all that I could on North Dakota fallout studies. A letter to Mr. Van Heuvelen referred me to various federal agencies. Subsequent correspondence with the AEC, the Weather Bureau, the Public Health Service produced much information; officials were very cooperative in making data available to me, personally. I received maps showing the paths of radioactive clouds moving directly from the Nevada test site to North Dakota, data showing that Missouri River water had contained over the maximum permissible amount of radioactivity, that sr-90 deposition at Fargo had increased several hundred times in one day, and that Mandan milk had contained as much as 36 strontium units. None of these facts have ever been officially reported to the public, but have been circulated quietly to business leaders and scientists.

This reticence is not limited to North Dakota, but extends to our neighbor state of Minnesota, which is known in scientific circles for its contaminated wheat. When I asked state officials for figures on the sr-90 in milk tested by the Minnesota State Health Department, I received the following reply: "In our opinion, the public climate in regard to levels of this isotope (sr-90) in the environment has been too emotional, and we have concluded that interpreted data only, without specific reference to sampling sites, should be reported at least for the present time. . . ."

I must, therefore, conclude that had it not been for the local newspapers, we never would have learned the state of affairs in North Dakota, despite the fact that it is one of the hottest areas in the country.

E. W. PFEIFFER
School of Medicine
University of North Dakota

*Grand Forks, N.D.*

[*Reprints of the original Walter Schneir article on sr-90 fallout are available at* The Nation: *single copies, 10c; 10 copies 75c; 25 copies, $1.25; 100 copies, $4. Payment must accompany order.*—ED.]

## Splitting Atomic Hairs

*Dear Sirs*: Thank you for sending me the galley proof of Mr. Schneir's letter [*The Nation*, May 9] and for the opportunity to comment on it.

The facts are quite straightforward. Dr. Martell sent me a rough draft of his article but I did not receive the final version. In other words, I had the complete scientific information but not the exact wording.

W. F. LIBBY
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission

*Washington, D.C.*

## The Tiger on Leash

*Dear Sirs*: "The President or the Tiger," by Richard Harris, in *The Nation* of May 9 is its most important item. The fantasy of our President's *acting* on his own past assertion that war, for any reason, is unthinkable, should have been printed in letters ten feet high on paper a hundred yards square. Instead, it went unmentioned on your cover where three (excellent) articles were listed. A fantasy, I suppose you thought, is only a fantasy after all.

BERTRAM F. WILLCOX

*Ithaca, N. Y.*

*Dear Sirs:* "The rest, of course, is well known," writes Richard Harris in "The President or the Tiger" (*Nation*, May 9). That gets Harris off the hook, but what *did* happen after the President made his stunning declaration for political and military sanity? My guess is that, far from resigning, the generals and admirals rose from their desks and took over the country. I further predict that the Air Force seized the initiative in restoring old-fashioned madness to its rightful primacy. The admirals might hesitate, but those colonel and general flyboys know how to deal with subversion, in the White House or anywhere else.

CARL DREHER

*Brewster, N. Y.*

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The Nation, May 23, 1959. Vol. 188, No. 21

The Nation, published weekly (except for omission of four summer issues) by The Nation Company and copyright 1959, in the U.S.A. by the Nation Associates, Inc., 333 Sixth Avenue, New York 14, N. Y. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y.

Subscription Prices Domestic—One year $8, Two years $14, Three years $20. Additional postage per year, Foreign and Canadian $1.

Change of Address: Three weeks' notice is required for change of address, which cannot be made without the old address as well as the new.

Information to Libraries: The Nation is indexed in Readers Guide to Periodical Literature, Book Review Digest, Index to Labor Articles, Public Affairs, Information Service, Dramatic Index.



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*NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 23, 1959*
*VOLUME 188, No. 21*

THE NATION

# EDITORIALS

## Yesterday's Hoffa

John L. Lewis may be an old-fashioned tragedian in his now rare public appearances, but neither his orotund tones nor his bushy eyebrows can account for the fact that he can always be sure of an audience. The fact is that he has always had uncommon practical wisdom and the courage to be forthright, and along the way he has accumulated a vast fund of experience. All these he showed in his strictures on the pending labor-reform bills before a standing-room-only session of the House Labor Committee.

The press and the publicity media have mellowed toward Lewis, but he has not forgotten when he was their whipping boy precisely as James R. Hoffa is now. Hoffa is not and never could be a Lewis; it is a symbol of the time's decay that no worthier successor in the role of scapegoat can be found. But Lewis is not grateful for the degree of respectability he has been belatedly accorded. Hoffa, he predicted, will be enthusiastically re-elected as long as the Senate Rackets Committee "keeps trying to send him to the penitentiary for crimes he didn't commit."

The major service John L. performed was, however, in his manhandling of the notion that we could all be one big, happy middle-class family if only the bloated, racket-ridden unions could be pried off the backs of the poor, downtrodden corporations. The fact is that in the United States there is no labor party and labor has no defenders of consequence outside of its own ranks. Another fact is that nothing stands between millions of Americans and poverty in the midst of plenty except membership in a union and the right to strike. And still another fact: the interests of labor and capital may coincide in general theory, but in specific instances labor gets what it can command by its economic power, and nothing else. In what remains essentially a combat situation, there are always those ready and eager to use labor racketeering as an excuse for union busting, and this is their busy legislative season. If they are stopped short, it will be largely John L. Lewis' doing. He quoted Joseph Curran, head of the National Maritime Union, as saying that the AFL-CIO was "trying to compromise with the headman's axe," and added that he wished to associate himself with that statement. So do we, and we mean specifically the Kennedy-Ervin bill.

## Mr. Hoover at the Throttle

J. Edgar Hoover celebrated his thirty-fifth anniversary as head of the FBI much as he celebrated the thirty-fourth and thirty-third. He stood four-square on his record, urged the police to get tough with juvenile punks, and added his own congratulations to the thousands which poured in from members of Congress, governors, legislators, heads of lesser departments in the federal government, civic and patriotic organizations and plain citizens. The flood of eulogy almost obscured a hair-raising revelation of Mr. Hoover's before the House Appropriations Committee, which provides the wherewithal for the FBI's good work. In recent months, the Great Protector announced, the railroad industry has been singled out as a primary target for Communist penetration. Having thrown this bombshell, Mr. Hoover went off the record, the better to combat the enemy's machinations. And well he might, for finally the Reds seem to have latched on to a popular cause. No one is more aware of this than Mr. Hoover, who in January was photographed in a striped cap and bandana bestowed, together with honorary membership in the sodality, by the Grand Chief Engineer of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. He knows, and so do the conductors, that the commuters are ripe for revolution. Worst of all, the impending revolution cuts straight across class lines, and its Lenin may as well be a stockbroker as a bootblack. Alike they pay higher fares, ride on fewer and slower trains, peer through dirtier windows, and sit on dustier seats. At Mr. Hoover's induction, the Grand Chief Engineer extolled him for "helping thwart the efforts of those who would destroy our government and our way of life by infiltrating and seizing control of our labor organizations." Mr. Hoover had better bend his efforts toward helping the commuter before they seize the red flags from the brakemen and, after all these years, bring to fulfillment his own dire prophecies.

## Courage on the Campus

The contagion of courage is spreading from campus to campus and may soon reach epidemic proportions. First of all, there was the nearly unanimous opposition to the "loyalty oath" provision of the National Defense Education Act; a dozen or so institutions have

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announced that they will not accept scholarship funds as long as the offensive oath is retained and several have already returned funds. Now the faculty and students at the University of Arkansas are up in arms over Act 10, a state enactment which requires all teachers (and administrative personnel) in the public schools (including state universities) to list under oath all the organizations to which they have belonged or to which they have contributed funds in the last five years — the period subsequent to the Supreme Court's decision in the desegregation cases. Ostensibly, the Arkansas act is aimed at enforcing recent legislation prohibiting the employment in Arkansas schools of any member of the NAACP. But the students and faculty at the state university are quite aware that it has a wider relevance. "What we are really confronted with," to quote Dean Gurden Nichols, "is a belated effort to make a copy of the McCarthy era."

This note of realism is echoed in other protests from the university. The organizational affiliations of Professor Edgar A. Albin of the Art Department are limited to the American Association of University Professors, the P.T.A. and the Presbyterian Church. "Why then," he asks, "do I even hesitate to list them? After all, I have nothing to be ashamed of and the penalty is great if I do not comply." His answer: "Twenty-eight years of working with young people have convinced me that they can spot a phony very quickly. How then can I continue to teach in a university situation, where matters of principle and value are always under the cool light of reason, if by my act I demonstrate hypocrisy? Act 10 is a vicious piece of legislation. . . . It signals but one of many encroachments on human dignity and human liberty this state has already suffered."

A suit brought by a Negro teacher to enjoin enforcement of the act — a hearing is scheduled for May 25 — is being supported by the faculty at the state university, which is preparing to bring an action on its own behalf. In this spring of 1959, a new courage has returned to the campus; it could spread far beyond.

## The Ladies of the Night

Unanimous votes at the U.N. are rare enough; when the vote is in approval of a resolution offered by a Communist state, it takes a real safari to find a precedent. Last week the miracle of unanimity was accomplished by the Social Commission. Sponsor of the resolution was Czechoslovakia; the subject, prostitution. Given the subject, there will be a natural tendency to belittle the miracle; but the reader who does so fails to take into account the intrusion of political ideology into all U.N. debate. In this instance, the Soviet delegate insisted that prostitutes (whom the British delegate elegantly termed "ladies of the night") were the unhappy offspring of capitalism, and that the best way to do away with the one was to do away with the other. The U.S. delegate admitted that he was no expert on who walked Gorky Street at night, but pointed out that there were other East European capitals in a less fortunate position; they had gotten rid of the capitalists, but the offspring still seemed to be around. Neutralist Indonesia argued that war's economic effects were a prime cause of prostitution, recalling that the number of call girls in his country had risen since World War II.

The Czech resolution called upon governments "to take all appropriate measures for the elimination of causes leading to the traffic in persons and the exploitation of the prostitution of others through constant improvement of the social and economic living conditions of their peoples." The Czechs took the position, apparently, that prostitution was an undesirable, and removable, appendage of capitalism, communism and neutralism alike. Happily, in the end all agreed.

## The Sorcerer's Apprentices

The new technique by which public men support their lieutenants, known as the "I need him" defense, has quite predictably spread from President Eisenhower to executives in less exalted posts. Mayor Wagner of New York has lunched with Park Commissioner Robert Moses (after a delay of almost melodramatic protraction) on the issue of whether the city is to have free Shakespeare in Central Park again this summer, and has announced that he will back Mr. Moses' resolution that it shall not. Mr. Wagner never says that Mr. Moses is right in opposing the free performances, in fact he noticeably goes out of his way to avoid saying it; he supports the ban on the ground that "the only alternative would be to get a new Park Commissioner" —an eventuality that, curiously enough, the Mayor finds unthinkable.

Now our system of government assumes that the elected officer is the boss and that his appointees serve at his pleasure. But if the present trend continues we are going to see appointees running the land through the facilities of the sorcerer's apprentices who originally picked them. That is bad democracy. Perhaps candidates for appointment should submit to a test that would guarantee them to be at least 10 per cent less resolute than their patrons. In the present era of public life that might produce some rather weedy appointees, but at least it would spare us such distressing spectacles as Mayor Wagner phoning Mr. Moses at a number where he knew for a fact that his ogreish Park Commissioner would not be found.

## The Rehabilitation of Pasternak

President Harlan H. Hatcher of the University of Michigan has been touring the Soviet Union and his



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observations are reported from Moscow by Harrison E. Salisbury in *The New York Times*. "Soviet society is moving at a much faster rate than is generally realized either here or abroad," Dr. Hatcher declared, and added it is time that "my countrymen begin to understand that changes can take place in the Soviet system and that these changes are actually occurring before our eyes." And for Moscow's leaders he had the advice that "the era of the robber barons, the era of primitive nineteenth-century capitalism, has ended in the United States and given way to a completely new way of life."

That the Khrushchev era is not the Stalin era (neither is it, nor can it be, its opposite) is indicated by some recent developments in the case of Boris Pasternak. The *Times* reported that Pasternak, as translator, is given prominent billing in the production of Schiller's *Mary Stuart,* now running in Moscow. This conflicted somewhat with the popular notion, in the United States, that Pasternak must be selling pencils in front of the theatre. But it remained for *Newsweek* (May 18) to give some inside dope on the latest development. It seems, says *Newsweek*, that after Khrushchev got around to reading *Doctor Zhivago*, he promptly fired a pair of Moscow party officials; removed the head of the Komsomol youth organization, who had distinguished himself by calling Pasternak a "pig," and replaced Alexei Kochetov as editor of the *Literary Gazette*.

True or not, *Newsweek's* speculations are interesting. But if Khrushchev really wants to do a job, he should try to alter the atmosphere in which such "unwashed malignants," as Lord Byron called their counterparts of the nineteenth century, perpetrate their literary lynchings. When there is no compulsion for the artist to conform, the evolution which President Hatcher discerned will have progressed to the point where the Pasternaks will no longer be manhandled, their wrongs will no longer need righting, and Mr. Khrushchev will have more leisure for reading.

# China: the Ghost at the Summit . . *by Edgar Snow*

NO CHINESE delegates will appear at Geneva or a Summit conference, yet the presence of China will be felt. If, as the Administration prepares for high-level Soviet talks with its back squarely turned on the momentarily quiescent Taiwan Strait—and a sidelong hopeful glance at the diversion in Tibet — that only reflects the weakness of a policy habitually one of reaction rather than action. Peking could at any moment, merely by renewing the bombardment of Quemoy, dramatically remind us of awkward truths irreconcilable with that policy. Or Khrushchev could, at a Summit meeting, demand that China be admitted to the United Nations as a quid pro quo to assure world enforcement of a ban on nuclear tests. Either device would help demonstrate the fact, still stubbornly denied by U.S. policy, that China is now the fourth power in the world, second in the Communist bloc only to the USSR, and holds a hidden veto over any East-West "peace" negotiations.

*EDGAR SNOW is the author of many books on China. The latest is* Journey to the Beginning *(Random House).*

The possibility of a sudden broadening of the agenda at the Summit does not constitute the only reason, however, why the moment is propitious for reviewing our China policy. There are signs that Mr. Dulles' retirement and his replacement by Christian A. Herter probably mark, more than was first supposed, the end of an era of one-man U.S. foreign policy and the beginning of an era in which a Democratic majority will make a growing impact in opposition. Mr. Dulles himself was originally as adamantly opposed to a Summit meeting as he was to any change in the China embargo on trade and travel; and he never wavered in his support of the nuclear arming of Germany. Since Secretary Herter assumed office, the President has conceded the Summit conference as virtually certain, which also means postponing, at least, the arming of Bonn with H-bombs. And soon after the announcement of the resignation (effective July 1) of Walter Robertson, Dulles' Assistant Secretary for China Affairs and staunchest defender of the Chiang-is-China credo, the travel ban was eased somewhat.

Today all rational Congressmen concede that our recognition of Peking is ultimately inevitable. "Ultimately" may not yet be here, but the moment has arrived when it is possible to take a long objective look at a China policy which has not been seriously questioned under Dulles for six years.

IN THE EYES of most of Asia, and in the candid appraisal of many Americans, this policy is one of armed intervention in the internal affairs of China — just as surely as Peking's policy is one of armed intervention in the internal affairs of Tibet. The difference is not only that Tibet and China are both Asian states, but that Tibet has been ethnically and culturally closely linked to China for thousands of years, has been under Chinese military occupation many times, has been politically under China's suzerainty for centuries, was for long periods recognized as part of the Chinese empire, and is claimed by no other foreign power. The United States, on the other hand, is not an Asian power, has no past claim to Taiwan or Quemoy, and has pledged itself, by declarations at Cairo and Potsdam, to return Taiwan to China — not to Chiang Kai-shek personally



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—following its liberation from Japanese conquest.

The United States has intervened in China before, but only in concert with other powers. Today we have alliances with forty-four states, any one of which might involve us in war; but none is obliged to support our alliance with Chiang. Our intervention is unilateral and in effect makes Taiwan a U.S. protectorate.

American intervention in China really began more or less accidentally during World War II. From Pearl Harbor onward, the United States gave all its military and economic aid exclusively to Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist Party and its armies. This practice continued after the war and, in a more desultory way, throughout most of the Chinese civil war until Chiang Kai-shek was defeated by the Communists.

Washington chose not to recognize the new Red regime. For a time American policy was one of "letting the dust settle." By the late spring of 1950, there were indications that the United States would not oppose seating China in the U.N. and might not deny China's claims to sovereignty in Taiwan. The outbreak of war in Korea on June 25, 1950, changed everything and has profoundly affected America's whole policy ever since.

President Truman, when he committed American troops to the defense of South Korea, unilaterally interposed the U.S. Navy in the Taiwan Strait to "neutralize" that area. We now affirmed that Chiang headed the only legitimate government of China. In 1953, President Eisenhower accepted a truce with the Chinese forces to end the war in Korea — on terms which Truman had rejected. Soon afterward, Eisenhower compensated by "unleashing" Chiang Kai-shek for a hypothetical return to the mainland. Then Mr. Dulles worked out an alliance with the Nationalists, whom we have been rearming, training and subsidizing ever since.

During the past five years it has become abundantly clear that the Generalissimo's dream cannot be fulfilled except as part of a major American war against China. Premier Khrushchev recently declared that an attack on the People's Republic would be considered an attack on the USSR. Since a Soviet-American war over China would mean a world war and world destruction, the Generalissimo's aspirations cannot today be considered a sane possibility.

U.S. policy of "wait and see" has thus metamorphosed into a policy of "wait for a miracle." And yet, as seen from the China mainland, it is still a policy of provocation aimed at doing "all we can to contribute" (short of war) to the overthrow of the Peking government. The United States forbids the People's Republic access to Taiwan. Since 1950, it has imposed a total trade embargo against the mainland. Our Taiwan allies, using American weapons, have variously blockaded, harassed and attacked China's shipping and aircraft; they boast of having landed spies, saboteurs and armed bands in China. At least partly because of such activities, China began shelling the Nationalist base on Quemoy last August. President Eisenhower was obliged to go before the nation and try to explain why we would be morally justified in risking war in order to keep Chiang in possession of that small remote island, unquestionably a part of China.

ASIDE FROM the foregoing, what has our policy accomplished? It has temporarily kept China out of the U.N. It has influenced some allied nations to withhold recognition. It has deprived China of the full prestige of a great power and compelled her to carry on a political counter-offensive against the United States on a wide front in Asia and Africa.

The costs to the United States cannot yet be assessed, but the mere financial drain is formidable. Defense and other support given to the Nationalists since 1950 begins to approach $3 billion; it now runs in the neighborhood of $600 million annually. That expenditure is roughly fifty times more, per capita, for Taiwan, than the total and annual Soviet per capita loan-aid for Red China. The figures do not include the cost of maintaining the Seventh Fleet or of keeping American air and ground forces in Taiwan to man missile

*Chiang Kai-shek*

bases and train Chiang's aging troops. Consider one such item. During the crisis of 1958, Admiral Burke had to go before a Congressional committee for a special allowance to pay for convoying Nationalist supply ships to Quemoy. The amount requested: $1 billion.

What else? The embargo hurt China, but gave her no choice except heavier dependence on Russia for trade and for equipment which has tied her to Soviet industrial techniques and patterns for the indefinite future. It greatly stimulated China's intensive internal development and drive for self-sufficiency while it totally cut off American trade exchange with an economy now probably expanding at a faster rate than any in the world. The costliest long-range item chargeable to attempts to "hasten the collapse" of the People's Republic may prove to be the complete loss of communications with the world's most populous nation during a period of the most dramatic and agonizing revolutionary planned change in history.

Continued adherence to the Taiwan alliance clearly must be justified by political considerations beyond the values measurable in terms of military necessity, economics or human communications. What are they? The State Department's answer is a policy statement released in August, 1958, which asserted that our policy is primarily based on two aims:

*1.* Opposition to the Communist



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bloc's plans to destroy the way of life of non-Communist countries and dominate the world;

2. Opposition to the Chinese Communists' ambitions to carry the Communist revolution to the rest of Asia and later to the entire earth.

The first point is contradicted by the fact that we recognize most other Communist-ruled countries, including the seat of iniquity, Moscow. Is there some special reason why China must be an exception? Mr. Dulles has on various occasions offered various explanations, and these were also summarized in the 1958 policy statement, which argued that recognition of China would: (1) deprive overseas and mainland Chinese of hope of eventual liberation; (2) dishonor us and betray our Taiwan allies; (3) probably mean seating China in the U.N. against both United States and U.N. interests; (4) imply a resumption of trade, which China would use only "to develop as rapidly as possible a formidable military establishment and heavy industry to support it"; (5) reopen wide cultural interchanges which would endanger China's "close neighbors" by pressure of "additional intense subversive activities."

The first, third, fourth and fifth points listed could, if generally applied, lead to withdrawal of recognition from all Communist-ruled lands and to the break-up of the U.N. The second, fourth and fifth are almost embarrassingly subjective, if not mere fatuous speculation unsusceptible of factual proof. Dulles' brief also ignored the facts that India, Burma and Pakistan, "close neighbors" of China which together hold the bulk of Asia's non-Communist population, already recognize Peking; that these powers, as well as five other Asian states, have long been voluntarily exposed to the dangers of cultural exchange; and that our own embargo has in no demonstrable way prevented China's development as a military power or her unprecedented industrial growth.

IT IS ONE thing to demonstrate the unsatisfactory results of nonrecognition. To define functional alternatives is not so easy. The United States is by now far too deeply entangled by past commitments for us merely to say to Peking, "We recognize you." The logic of such a step certainly does imply at least some of the consequences pointed out by Mr. Dulles.

Recognition would indeed mean withdrawal of U.S. opposition to seating China in the U.N. It would also mean resumption of trade and cultural exchange. It would mean abandonment of the position that the People's Republic does not represent China. No doubt it would follow that most nations within the U.S. alliance system would eventually recognize Peking also. Viable formulas would have to be devised to secure the withdrawal of both Chinese and American troops from Korea and Indo-China, to guarantee existing frontiers of those divided countries by multilateral means, and in so far as feasible to neutralize them in a disengagement operation. If one assumes representation for China in the U.N., that kind of agreement need not be impossible.

The legal status of Taiwan might finally have to be set inside the U.N., but I do not myself believe that America alone should attempt to plan its future. If China's suzerainty over Taiwan were recognized in principle, in exchange for a pledge not to use force to annex it for a given period while the issue were negotiated or placed before the U.N., many things could happen. Almost certainly Chiang Kai-shek would resign, along with most of his staff, once serious recognition talks began. A coalition representative of the Taiwan natives and the Nationalist immigrants would probably succeed him and quite likely seek direct negotiations with Peking. It is not unreasonable to assume that they would reach a basis for intramural agreement before the issue ever reached the U.N.

Such changes would of course mean important gains in international prestige for Peking. Would they necessarily be against the "enlightened self-interest" of the American people?

Would it be in American interests, or against them, to be able to test the stability of the People's Republic through observers on the spot? To our advantage or disadvantage to meet China directly when disputes arose between us? Would it be "good" or "bad" for us to be able to hold China's representatives to account before a world council in the case of situations endangering world peace—the potentials of the Sino-Indian dispute over the Tibetan rebellion, for example—rather than for China to remain legally unanswerable to a U.N. organization which excludes it?

Is China so clever, so powerful, so dreadful, that we must fear exposure to her ideas and culture, her propaganda, her products, the look of her people face to face, more than they fear us or we fear Russia? Is it more to China's advantage than ours to seek some disengagement on Asian frontiers where American armed forces stand, five thousand miles from their homeland, daily exposed to risks hardly definable as vital to the strategic security of American shores? Would it be for better or worse to seek to reduce unnecessary risks of "accidental war" and nuclear holocaust?

Certainly it would be illusory today to expect Moscow to repeat, in China, the mistakes whereby Stalin drove Yugoslavia down an independent road to socialism. But what would have happened to Yugoslavia by now if the United States had rejected trade with Tito? Would Poland be nearer freedom if we were to withhold trade and other relations with her? Is there any factual proof that China might not eventually respond, in a salutary way, to American initiative to help ease the heavy burdens imposed by her vast constructive effort to lift herself out of the centuries of mud? Edgar Faure, former premier of France, had this answer to make after he recently spent months visiting China:

> It is necessary [he wrote in *The Serpent and the Tortoise*] to develop relations of every kind, economic and cultural, with China. Our attitude of resistance and refusal produces a result quite the contrary to what we wish. . . .
>
> China must be helped to accomplish her modernization, for only that modernization can bring her closer to us, economically and politically.

All non-Communist governments abhor Communist dictatorships. They resent the arrogant manner in



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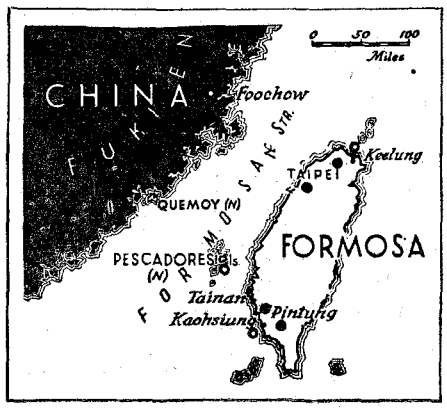
which foreigners in China have been abused, cheated, expropriated and expelled or imprisoned. But approval of the moral behavior of another government is not implied by, or necessary for, either recognition or membership in the U.N.; few states, if any, could get by St. Peter's watchful eye. Mr. Dulles himself once conceded this point specifically in the case of China, while Vice President Nixon recently justified continued "communications" with Hungary on the same grounds. Neither gentleman has anywhere gone so far as to claim that non-recognition had or could bring about repentance and reform in any government.

IF, OFFICIALLY, this Administration has rejected recognition, it may be asked whether Peking is equally uninterested. The answer might lie in the following statement by Chou En-lai last September:

> In the Sino-American ambassadorial talks which started in August, 1955, the Chinese side time and again proposed that the two parties should, in accordance with the principles of mutual respect and sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, issue a statement declaring their intention to settle the dispute [in the Taiwan area] through peaceful negotiations and without resorting to the threat or use of force against each other.

Repeated use of the ambiguous phrase "Taiwan area," and the emphasis on Quemoy and Matsu in Chou's statement, suggested that negotiations could at that time have been opened concerning the offshore islands, alone. But Mr. Dulles' answer was the old counter-demand that the People's Republic renounce its right to use force to overthrow the Nationalists anywhere. It now appears that Peking prefers a continuation of the armed stalemate rather than make any concession which might becloud a clear title to all Chinese territory.




With Soviet nuclear power behind it, Peking now has reason to feel that time is on its side. Today China is probably less interested in winning United States recognition than it is in winning early admission to the United Nations. The possibility that the United States may be outflanked and outvoted on the question of China's representation even as early as the next meeting of the General Assembly remains a real one. Nehru insists that, despite developments in Tibet, he intends to continue to demand a seat for China in the U.N. The day the seat is won the United States will have lost its chance for a strategic withdrawal in good order from basically untenable positions. Its China policy may then fall apart in a shambles.

CURRENT Communist "peace offensives" are genuine at least to this extent: both Moscow and Peking leaders know that nothing could save them from burning with the rest of us in World War III. Since 1953, and repeatedly since the twentieth and twenty-first party congresses, the Communist bloc has affirmed, both in theory and practice, that it will increasingly depend upon vigorous economic, trade, propaganda and political offensives to win world victory. It is this invasion of the world market, rather than danger of military attack, which constitutes what Allen W. Dulles, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has called the greatest threat the United States has faced in history.

During a visit to Moscow in 1957, Mao Tse-tung made the following significant statement:

> The whole world now has a population of 2.7 billion, of which the various Socialist countries have nearly one billion; the independent, former colonial countries, more than 700 million; the countries now struggling for independence or for complete independence, 600 million; and the imperialist camp only about 400 million. . . . At present, it is not the West wind that is prevailing over the East wind, but the East wind over the West.

The Communists clearly aim to outflank and encircle the United States not by force of arms, but by a combined economic-political offensive. While they will *at all times* hold onto a military equilibrium, they have much to gain by reducing the capital outlay for military means. Their foreign target is the 700 million people in the newly independent states and the 600 million in areas "now struggling for independence or complete independence," including those dominated by "Yankee imperialism" in Latin America. In this sector of the world, the average per capita income is less than $100 per annum, but this sector is now also fully awake to the possibilities of a better life; the quickest means of attaining it—not necessarily the nicest for "the West"—have the strongest appeal.

IT IS not overt Chinese Communist aggression, but the poverty, backwardness and inequality of that vast underdeveloped world which constitutes the major challenge to the United States. By convincing that world that communism offers the best and quickest means of liberation and the development of what Senator Fulbright recently called "a national personality," the Soviet bloc seeks to win to its side the balance of world power. The true deep weakness of U.S. policy toward China lies in its long-continued blindness to that fact. It lies in past heavy overemphasis on armed resistance to change as the best and quickest answer to human needs, upon immense concentrations of the wrong weapons in the wrong places in preparation for a war already lost, while the preliminary skirmishes are beginning elsewhere in Asia and Africa in that other war where the last decision will be made.

U Thant, Burma's permanent representative to the U.N., recently made this simple, true observation:

> There is one major flaw in all Western aid to underdeveloped countries that makes it appear that the West is giving help for its own cold war purposes. . . . If the West is to get any lasting benefit out of its aid programs in the form of good relations with the recipients it must rethink and restate its motives.



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In the long run, the greatest benefit likely to accrue by recognizing the giant fact of China would be the compulsion to do just that: to rethink and restate our motives and aims in foreign policy. For we should not be deceived about one thing. Recognizing China would inevitably mean admission of the failure of a policy of non-recognition. It would also mean acceptance of the status quo imposed by revolutionary change on a wide scale following World War II. It would mean the beginning of the end of the cold war and inescapable acceptance of that challenge thrown down to us for a war by other means — the means of competitive coexistence.

Recognition is not, therefore, something to be undertaken without a clearly thought-out alternative world policy, as well as China policy. After ten wasted years, it is now beginning to penetrate a number of ambitious brains in Washington that the alternative can only be large-scale international planning, financing and fulfillment of a partnership between the advanced and the underdeveloped nations of the world.

RECOGNITION of China may yet be far off, but one immediate pre-Summit move could be made to clear away some of the worst debris endangering the success of a Summit meeting. The United States should tell Chiang Kai-shek that our alliance with him does not cover the defense of 30,000 Nationalist troops on Quemoy and Matsu; that those islands unquestionably belong to the mainland and not to Taiwan; and that, if another crisis develops over them, the U.S. Navy will not intervene. Chiang would have no choice but to withdraw. The President could and should then announce that those islands are not necessary to the defense of Taiwan (no competent expert could dispute it) and that, as a contribution to the pacification of the Taiwan Strait, and to world peace, he had recommended their evacuation. So that such a just move could not be misunderstood as "appeasing aggressors," the President might at the same time reiterate that the United States stands ready, together with its allies and the U.N., to assist any nation threatened by armed attack from China or any other power.

If the President took this one step, it could go far to restore some mobility in American policy, inspire confidence in American intentions throughout Asia and the world, deprive China of a useful propaganda tool, strengthen the United States position at the Summit, and win valuable time and freedom and wide cooperation in the rethinking and restating of motives and peaceful alternatives. Not least, it would somewhat ease our cramped quarters in the strait jacket of an alliance by which Chiang Kai-shek thus far has bound us to his own one-sided ambitions.

If the United States waits until the Summit meeting, or the next shelling of Quemoy, or China's appearance in the U.N., however, that opportunity may be lost and none so favorable may recur.

# KENTUCKY'S TRAGIC STRIKE . . *by Ron M. Linton*

*Hazard, Kentucky*

LEAN, tawny men, coal-grime ground into their skin, sit quietly on logs a few hundred feet from ugly, black, loading ramps. If you ask, they will show you that their pockets are empty except for an occasional coin or a voucher for $27 worth of food (a week's supply) from their union. A few secrete an additional item: check stubs attesting to the wages they earned when they were working. Some stubs show earnings of $35 for two weeks' work.

These are the picketing United Mine Workers who have struck the truck mines buried in the backwoods mountains of Eastern Kentucky. "I'll stay out as long as the union buys my groceries," one of them says. "And then I'll stay out longer. If John tells me to strike, I strike; when John tells me to go back, I'll go back."

Why this loyalty to the United Mine Workers and John L. Lewis?

Because the union-owned hospitals in the region stand as memorials to the protection of the miner's health; to his wife's giving birth in a warm, antiseptic room instead of a cold, unpainted hovel; to his children's chances of growing to adulthood.

Because the coal wage in the Hazard, Big Sandy and Harlan fields has climbed high since the dog years of the twenties and early thirties, although it is still well below the scale of many other fields.

Because the miners have watched men make a quick buck in a small truck mine and refuse to pay the union royalty that provides for the health, welfare and pensions of the union members.

Because they look at the pretty homes of the small owner and wonder about his complaint that he can't afford to raise wages.

Because they think the small owners are fronting for the big operators in a determined effort to bust their union in this already sickeningly depressed area, where ugly economics befoul the natural beauty of the mountains.

But if they have good reason for loyalty to the union, they also have good reason for worry. For there is truth to the mine owners' protestation that the new contract demands will drive them out of business and there will be fewer jobs.

SOME 7,000 to 11,000 miners have been on strike since mid-March. Theirs is not a simple strike; there is no black and white, even though each side demands of the other total, unconditional surrender. Even this is too simple a formation, because there are more than two sides.

*RON M. LINTON is labor editor of the Louisville* Courier-Journal.



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There is the striking miner and the one who is not. There is the owner who has refused the union demands and the one who has signed. And there is the rail or captive (both mechanized) mine where per capita production is double that of the truck mines. Finally, there are the National Labor Relations Board, the federal courts, the state police and the National Guard.

Even the mine nomenclature is confusing. Truck mines are what their name implies: they cart their coal by truck to ramps on railroad tracks in order to get it to market. They are pick-and-shovel operations, uneconomical by the owners' admission. They came into existence during World War II, when the demand for coal increased sharply and the big mines gave up operations that didn't yield to mechanization. Many of them owe their existence to the approximately forty ramp owners in the five counties. The ramp operator either owns mines, or leases them to operators who then are indebted to the ramp owner. The rail mine is served directly by a railroad; a captive mine is owned, characteristically, by a railroad or steel company.

THE STRIKE began in a five-county area of the Hazard and Big Sandy fields against some 750 truck mines and loading ramps, each employing from a handful to several hundred workers.

More than 150 owners have since signed the new contract. With but two exceptions, the rail and captive mines signed before the strike began. In addition, in two other counties of the Big Sandy field, all truck mines and ramps also signed.

The new contract calls for a wage increase to $24.25 a day—a $2-a-day increase over the old contract, but from $10 to $12 a day more than what most of the truck mines have been paying. The contract also calls for a protective wage clause which would prevent ramp owners from buying coal from non-union mines. This would have a twofold effect: it would compel all mines to pay the 40-cent-a-ton union royalty and it would unionize the mines that so far have escaped unionization.

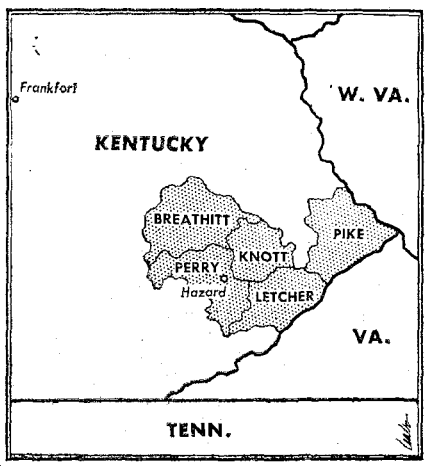
The truck-mine owners who refused to sign the contract say it would drive them out of business. The ramp operators who have refused to sign say the protective wage clause is a secondary boycott.

It is true that many of the truck mines will go out of business under the new contract if the ramp owner doesn't sign. The ramp owner controls the price of coal that the truck miner gets. This has been about $3.50 a ton. Under the new contract, the truck mine will need about $5.50 a ton. But if all the truck mines sign the contract, the ramp owner will not be able to play the non-union mine against the union mine and thus hold his price below that of the rail mines.

This strike is essentially against the ramps. The picketing was at the ramps because without ramps coal can't get to market. And if the ramps sign, all the mines must sign.

In the early stages of the strike, it was difficult to tell how many men had struck. The U.M.W. officials insist that production was cut so sharply that the strike would have been over in a week except for the intervention of the state police, who moved in to keep law and order, to keep the roads open, and to prevent mob action. When they moved in, the coal trucks started moving again and some mines began working.

Today, in Pike County, about 25 per cent of the mines are reported to be operating. In Perry, Letcher, Breathitt and Knott counties, about ten ramps and an undetermined number of mines are functioning, at least partially. The Louisville & Nashville Railroad, which handles most of the East Kentucky coal, is moving about 50 per cent of the normal tonnage out of the fields.




But even with the state police present, and some men reporting to work, mine operators demanded the National Guard and martial law. Three men have been killed and five ramps have been destroyed by fire and dynamiting.

The National Guard was called out and patrolled by day, but not by night. Violence continued after nightfall. The union charged the violence was provoked, that Governor A. B. Chandler had promised to disarm the operators and didn't, that the owners destroyed their own ramps for insurance and to get martial law.

Ramp operators in Perry County are well armed, and guerrilla warfare is carried on almost nightly on both sides.

AFTER the state police and the National Guard came the National Labor Relations Board. Acting on charges filed by the operators, the board went into federal court and obtained a temporary restraining order that set out rules of conduct for the U.M.W. The first result of this was the ending of all picketing. For the union, this was not too big a blow, since only nine ramps were being picketed.

More important is the fact that the restraining order shifted the emphasis of the strike from economic action to legal action. The N.L.R.B. general counsel will attempt to prove that the mine owners are justified in their charge that the protective wage clause is a secondary boycott under the meaning of the Taft-Hartley Act, and is therefore illegal. If the courts affirm this interpretation, all the union's coal contracts may have to be renegotiated.

The ramp and truck-mine operators seem on the verge of victory. The union, barred from picketing and under injunction, finds itself under increasing pressure, and more and more men probably will trickle back to work.

But at best the truck-mine owners can win only a short-term victory. They have accused the union of collusion with the big operators to drive them out of business.

Yet it is just a matter of time until they go out of business, anyway. And they will go out of business



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even faster if they succeed in breaking the union. For if the truck mines win their fight with the union, the rail mines will crack down on the union, too. If the rail mines succeed, then they will be able to cut wages and royalty even more drastically than the truck mines—and force the small owners out of business by underpricing them. Some truck-mine operators openly admit that what they want is that part of the truck mines be unionized, and part not. This is the only way the present truck-mining operation can continue.

Local union officials deny that any mine must go out of business. They say a rise in coal prices is the answer. The union officials charge that the truck-mine owners are now in an economic squeeze only because they spent their money on luxuries instead of machinery.

On the national level, U.M.W. officials say: "You can look at this through a knot hole or from the broad standpoint." What they mean is, should the union allow the payment of a debased wage in East Kentucky in order to keep 7,000 men at work—and sacrifice the base wage of 173,000 other men in soft-coal fields? Should the union collect 40 cents a ton royalty on 95 per cent of the production and pay the health, welfare and pension plans for 100 per cent of the men?

The truck-mine owners are a breed of vanishing Americans. They go into business with almost no capital. They take the leavings of big business and now they are caught in the squeeze of an industrial society where mass production and automation turn out more for less.

The only one who stands to gain from this strike is the big-mine operator. If the union wins, many small operators will go out of business. If the union loses, the big mines will take advantage of the union in the next round of negotiations. The little man has had it either way, and the union is in danger as a result of his losing fight for life.

The matter, for all its complications, is yet susceptible to solution through government redevelopment of this depressed area.*

*The tragic story of the Appalachian South, of which East Kentucky forms only a small part, will appear shortly in *The Nation*.

## *THE 'SICK' COMMISSION*

# FCC and the NETWORKS . . *by Bernard Schwartz*

PUBLIC attention during the past year has been focused upon the improprieties committed by individual members of the Federal Communications Commission. These, however, have been only the most spectacular outward manifestations of a disease that has infected practically all of the FCC's recent work.

Perhaps the primary symptom of a "sick" agency like the FCC is its passive attitude toward its regulatory tasks. More and more, it has failed to give effect to the public interest — the purpose for which it was created. Instead, the commission tends increasingly to identify the public with the interest of the dominant groups in the industry to be regulated.

*BERNARD SCHWARTZ made headline news last year when he was dismissed as counsel for the Congressional Subcommittee on Legislative Oversight after he had accused the subcommittee of doing a "whitewash" job. Now teaching law at New York University, he is the author of the just-published* The Professor and the Commissions *(Knopf).*

The main beneficiaries of this attitude have been the broadcast networks. It is largely because of commission acquiescence that the networks have been able to acquire their present position of dominance in broadcasting. Nor is "dominance" too strong a word in this connection. "The record," declared a 1941 FCC report, "reveals at every turn a dominant position of the network organization in the field of radio broadcasting."

More recent studies reveal a similar situation with regard to television. "It is clear," states a 1957 report of the House Antitrust Subcommittee, "that CBS and NBC have a dominant position in the industry, and therefore exercise vast influence over television broadcasting and determine in large measure what the American people may hear and see over their television sets." According to this report, the two networks and the nine stations they owned and operated accounted for almost half of the total business done by the television broadcast industry in 1955 — an industry which then included some four networks and 455 TV stations (of which all but thirty-eight had some network affiliation).

Especially revealing in this respect are the figures contained in a 1957 FCC staff study. They show that the three networks now in existence (the third is ABC) account for close to 70 per cent of national television time sales, with CBS and NBC accounting for over 62 per cent. Network concentration is especially high in terms of what the study termed "one significant measure" — the proportion of network programs on TV stations during prime evening hours (i.e., 7:30-10:30 P.M.). During these hours, the networks account for close to 80 per cent of the total programs carried by commercial TV stations (over 90 per cent in the case of the basic stations of the CBS and NBC networks).

NETWORK dominance is bound to pose major problems in a system such as ours. "The First Amendment," the Supreme Court has affirmed, "rests on the assumption that the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources is essential to



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the welfare of the public." Americans have repudiated the notion of a government-operated monopoly of the air waves. But this imposes a corresponding responsibility, as Senator Magnuson has put it, "upon both the Congress and its administrative arm, the FCC, to insure that private monopoly does not occur where government monopoly is avoided."

The problem is compounded by the means through which the networks have acquired their dominance. In practice, network operation turns upon the contractual relationships between the networks and their affiliated stations. From the point of view of network control, the most important of these is the so-called provision for "option time," which requires affiliates to carry network programs up to twelve hours a day. On network demand, local programs must be dropped to make way for network programs. This enables the networks to pre-empt most of the broadcasting time of almost all the TV stations in the country, especially during the prime evening hours when the viewing audience is at its peak.

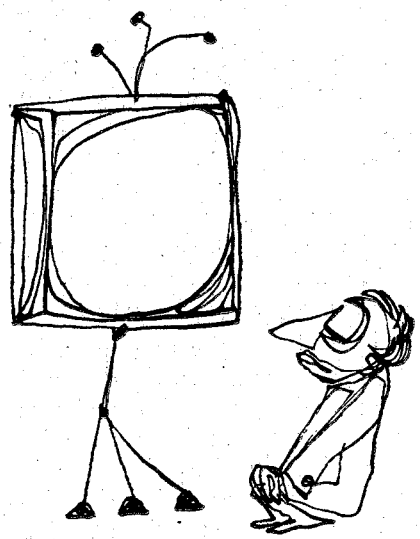
The effect of all this is to put the networks in a position to determine the great bulk of TV programming throughout the country—thus concentrating in a handful of men control over what video fare is to be available to the American people. As a 1955 Senate report put it, "The significance of [option time] cannot be minimized. It is believed that [it creates] an artificial and competitive advantage for the networks which helps to explain the dominant position they occupy in the industry."

Then there is the networks' so-called "must buy" policy, requiring an advertiser, if he desires to use the network, to buy broadcasting time on a large number of TV stations throughout the country. Thus, both CBS and NBC require advertisers to order time on a minimum of fifty-eight stations. The head of the Antitrust Division of the Justice Department links this practice directly with option time. "There is reason to believe," he has said, "that television advertisers accept the network-picked package of TV stations because of the networks' control, via time options, of prime telecasting time."

"Must buy" and the option-time clause drastically restrict the ability of the independent station competing with a network affiliate to sell time to an advertiser who is already tied to the affiliate. What this means in practice was shown by the 1956 testimony before a Senate committee by the head of station KTTV, an independent station in Los Angeles. It was his constant experience, he asserted, to be informed "by the advertiser or his agency that despite the fact that the KTTV proposal is more attractive, the advertiser must place the program on the network station in Los Angeles or he will be deprived of the opportunity of placing the program on stations affiliated with the network in other cities."

RESTRICTIONS upon competition such as are involved here present serious antitrust questions. There is, in fact, a striking similarity between these network practices and the practices in the motion-picture industry which the Supreme Court in 1948 held to be in violation of the antitrust laws. At the time, the Court outlawed so-called "block booking," which it defined as "the practice of licensing, or offering for license, one feature or group of features on condition that the exhibitor will also license another feature or group of features released by the distributors during a given time."

The relevancy of this definition to the major TV network practices is obvious. Both option time and "must buy," like block booking, eliminate the opportunity for the small competitor to obtain choice programs and put a premium on network size. Option time, in the words of a Senate report, is a "more virulent practice than block booking, for not only does it commit the station in advance to take a whole block of programming, but it is a combination or arrangement between the networks and their affiliates to oust the programs of important competitors in order to honor the option."



The view that the practices upon which network operation depends violate the antitrust laws has been asserted in recent years both by Senate and House committees and other government officials. On April 24, 1958, the head of the Justice Department's Antitrust Division advised the FCC commissioners that option time and "must buy" definitely violated the antitrust laws. Last March, Attorney General Rogers issued a formal opinion to the FCC that option time was illegal because it "substantially restrains the ability of affiliates to deal with the wares of network competitors during prime viewing time."

THE STATUTE under which the FCC operates expressly declares that the antitrust laws are applicable to broadcasting. This gives the commission, in the 1956 words of the FCC chairman, "a unique responsibility to conform its regulatory activities with the letter and spirit of the antitrust laws."

But in recent years the FCC has been composed of men basically out of sympathy with the objectives of the antitrust statutes. "Concentration does not frighten me," flatly asserted FCC Chairman Doerfer in testimony before a House Committee. Doerfer indicated that he saw no antitrust problems at all in the option time and "must buy" practices. As he put it, "If I go into a store and I want to buy a pair of pants and the fellow says I have got to buy the coat, too, I do not necessarily construe that as an unfair trade practice."

For the FCC chairman to use such a comparison is almost ludicrous. Even more important, however, is the fact that the lack of understanding of basic antitrust



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principles which Doerfer's statement indicates has been directly reflected in the operation of the commission as a whole. Despite numerous complaints of network antitrust violations, both by private parties and FCC staff memoranda, the FCC has taken no action.

Yet, as so often happens, administrative apathy may call forth its own cure in the form of Congressional inquiry and prodding. More and more frequently, in recent years, Congressional committees have expressed concern with the problem of network practices. Finally, under the direct urging of the Senate Commerce Committee, the FCC applied for and received appropriations to finance a comprehensive network study.

The study, which was conducted during 1955-57 by a specially appointed staff under the direction of Dean Roscoe L. Barrow of the University of Cincinnati, urged far-reaching changes in the FCC's attitude toward the networks. It strongly recommended that both option time and "must buy" be "prohibited through a Commission regulation." The elimination of these practices, said the report, "should result in a greater degree of competition in broadcasting, programming which is more responsive to community needs, and a more nearly nation-wide service. The viewing public would have available a wider variety of television service and a more varied program fare."

The Barrow recommendations are now before the FCC. The commission heard lengthy arguments against them by the networks last year; early this year, by a four-to-three vote, it rejected the recommendation that option time be outlawed. This decision did not receive the public attention and criticism it deserved. However, the Attorney General's sweeping condemnation of option time two months ago has now led the FCC to reconsider.

In recent years, the FCC has appeared to be the servant rather than the governor of the industry it is supposed to regulate. Certainly, the networks have had ample reason to consider the commission wholly "safe." But from the network point of view, this "safeness" has been substantially impaired by the current public loss of confidence in the commission. The fact is that, for the first time in years, there is a good chance of forcing the FCC to deal substantially with the problem of network dominance of the TV industry. Consistent public and Congressional pressure can assure action.

In a 1941 report, the FCC referred to the dangers involved in government operation of broadcasting. "But," asserted the report, "in avoiding the concentration of power over broadcasting in the hands of government, we must not fall into an even more dangerous pitfall: the concentration of that power in the hands of self-perpetuating management groups." Unless the present FCC is prodded into implementing the Barrow recommendations, the danger referred to by its predecessor could become a very real one in this country.

# ARMS AND THE MAN . . *by David Cort*

IN ANY HUMAN society that combines guns with passion, greed, heartbreak, family fights, children and hard liquor, somebody is going to get shot now and then, and maybe killed. Every third household in America owns a gun, and 15,000,000 Americans go hunting every year. Gunfire homicides, criminal, personal and accidental, come each year in the United States to about 5,000. (This does not include police killings of criminals.) Killings with weapons other than guns are much more common than gun murders. In addition, automobiles kill nearly 40,000 each year.

The elementary attitude toward the U.S. Constitution's "right to bear arms" seems to depend on which end of the gun the individual sees himself at. The Second Amendment would not reassure a duck.

The typical sociologist's attitude toward guns is that they are totally a bad thing—he evidently expects to be at the bad end.

Probably every state legislature in the country now has some bill before it to restrict further the ownership of firearms. Rhode Island is considering one that would provide that "no person shall possess firearms of any kind in his home unless a permit has been obtained from the police chief in a city or from the next top police authority in a town."

With every respect for the legislators' honorable intentions, it must be noted that similar regulations were decreed by Hitler, Mussolini, Franco and, of course, the Communists everywhere. Dictators have to know who has the guns. The Nazis' war against the underground was greatly facilitated by the lists of licensed gun-owners in the town halls of conquered Western Europe. They made fascinating reading for the *Gauleiters*. England's licensing system had so disarmed the English people before the Battle of Britain that what Churchill wanted most and first from the United States was the shipment of a half-million .300 rifles for the Home Guard. That ship was very carefully convoyed, because Churchill believed it carried the survival of England.

These terrible lessons are not as obsolete as is supposed in the atomic age. In an atomic war, intelligently conducted to conquer something worth having afterward, small units of enemy troops would appear suddenly in key areas of the United States. An American citizenry with guns at the right time at the right place would then be useful. In an atomic war insanely conducted to

*DAVID CORT, former* Time-Life *editor and author of* The Big Picture *and* The Calm Man, *is a frequent contributor.*



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commit world suicide, the survivors with guns would be a few criminals (who always have them) who would not scruple to loot and spoil the last remnants of civilization, and make brief holiday. Why not let the honest heads-of-family have guns, too? Some people think that if civilization dies, they would want to die with it, but others would expect to make some effort to survive even that great death.

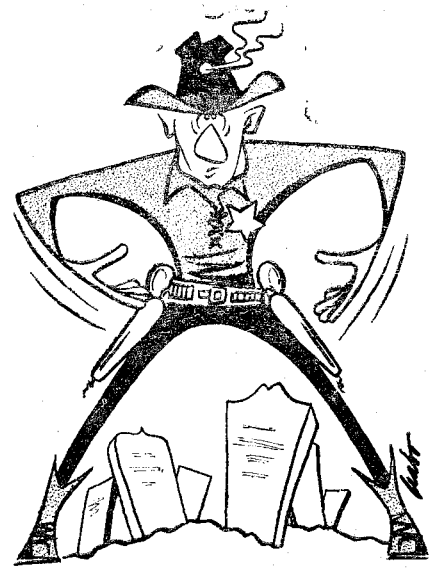
The Founding Fathers thought this matter of guns so crucial that they made it the concern of the *Second* Amendment to the Constitution: ". . . the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." They put this right ahead of the amendment guaranteeing the sanctity of the home and person and the citizen's trial rights. They believed in the sovereign citizen; they were not afraid of him with a gun; if they were afraid of anything, it was of the State. Guns were a very important part of the system of "checks and balances" conceived by the writers of the Constitution. It takes an extraordinary, lunatic faith in the modern official to believe that they were wrong.

MANY STATE and local laws would seem to infringe the sovereign right to keep and bear arms. The reason the Supreme Court has held them Constitutional revolves around two points: 1) whether the right is individual, or collective (as of "the people," who may be held as identical with "the State"); and 2) whether and how far this sovereign individual, or collective, right limits the powers of the separate states.

The Founding Fathers believed, and I believe today, that an honest, responsible man with a gun is a support of the free society.

The state and local laws respecting guns are generally conflicting, badly worded, ineffective and, in a country where everybody is constantly crossing state lines, ignored by peripatetic criminals. The criminal acquisition of weapons is explained by the hundreds of thefts from armories and military piers which go to outfit the underworld.

There are two relevant federal laws—the Firearms Acts of 1934 and 1938. The first taxes heavily the



making or transfer of any fully automatic weapon, rifle or shotgun with a barrel less than eighteen inches long (sixteen inches in the case of .22 caliber or smaller) or other concealable weapons except a pistol or revolver. The second controls the movement in interstate or foreign commerce of all firearms and all hand-gun ammunition. These laws are specifically aimed at stolen weapons and convicts, indicted persons and fugitives from justice.

New York's Sullivan Law objects to any unlicensed person's even owning a concealable weapon. California objects only to its being carried (barrel less than twelve inches) without a license. Los Angeles imposes a three-day waiting period before a weapon sale is concluded, permitting a check on the purchaser, and urges the whole state to adopt these procedures. Vermont, a very law-abiding state, has no law whatever about guns, except as in the commission of a crime.

IF THERE is to be any further law restricting ownership of guns, it should probably be a well-publicized federal law specifically aimed at criminals and stolen weapons. We could easily do without most local ordinances and concentrate on enforcing one uniform law. Hunting rifles and shotguns should never require a license or registration.

Personally, I am not very keen on having a gun around the house. Too many people, including children, sometimes pass through a mood where they would like to terminate a situation forever. A gun offers an unhappily irrevocable way to carry such a whim into fact. In homes where such moments are conceivable, a suggestion would be to keep the ammunition in the house of a neighbor who, in turn, has no gun it would fit. Still, the total of such homicides is amazingly small. Their importance is swollen by the fact that newspapers love them. Such headlines must have inspired the recent amazing statement of New York City Supreme Court Justice Samuel H. Hofstadter: "The Police Commissioner is valiantly striving against desperate odds to protect an *already lawless community*. . . ."

What? For one lovely moment one could almost believe that modern New York City is indistinguishable from Tombstone or Dodge City in the glorious age of hand-guns, as small boys would like to believe. For American thinking about guns is blanketed by an influence much more powerful than even police ordinances.

At every nightfall, twenty to thirty million American homes rock with the sound of sudden gunfire, preceded by an ominous uproar and followed by deadly silence. For all this suburban gunfire, the police are never interested. The gunmen are merely TV actors acting as if, in their scriptwriters' conception, they were living west of the Mississippi in a brief period following the year 1870.

The Western art form brings us to still another popular opinion about guns: that they represent virility. And so the population divides for and against guns about as it divides for and against virility.

IT IS surely safe to say that the strutters of virility tend to be deficient in virility, but not absolutely invariably. Most men look askance at men who must continually prove that they are men, unless they are obviously boys. This applies to the great hunters, muscle-benders, wife-beaters, muggers, saloon-fighters, etc. A strange note of effeminacy creeps into some of the avowedly manly magazines (while a note of manliness creeps into the so-called women's magazines). Virility, it may be recalled, was once the secret in-



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gredient of the Hearst press empire, but has been abandoned.

It is evidently heady stuff for an actor to be allowed to call another actor's bluff of virility, whip out the six-gun and blast away with the blanks. Bang, bang! Bluff called.

You won't believe this, but these actors have sincerely convinced themselves, even if a few small boys remain skeptical. One TV gunfighter, Hugh O'Brian (*Wyatt Earp*), recently announced that he is the fastest gun in Hollywood. Well, on re-examination, it seemed that several obscure stunt-men are faster. O'Brian re-defined his brag by saying that he was still the fastest gun among Hollywood stars of TV Western series. A star who has actually been shot at, Audie Murphy, thereupon challenged O'Brian to a duel with live ammunition. Mr. O'Brian politely explained that all he had ever meant in the first place was that he was the fastest gun merely in the sense of getting the gun out of the holster quick. He had not, he said, ever meant to imply that he knew what to do with the gun after he had gotten it out of the holster.

No sooner had this colossal gunfight died down than Steve McQueen (*Wanted: Dead or Alive*) made himself wanted by deposing that he is the only real he-man on TV among a crowd of sissies. Jock Mahoney (*Yancey Derringer*) responded: "I've got a hunch that if you were to stack Steve McQueen against a big boy like Chuck Connors (*Rifleman*), Clint Walker (*Cheyenne*) or Rory Calhoun (*The Texan*), Mr. McQueen would really be the weak sister of the group." Mr. Mahoney then challenged Mr. McQueen to an ordinary paratrooper survival test to determine which was the more man. These fellows are evidently feeling their glands in an important way, yet several of the TV heroes are middle-aged millionaires.

ANOTHER middle-aged millionaire, *Life*, has now gotten into the virility gunfight (succeeding Hearst) with a series on the winning of the West, with color pictures. Here were "the Earps and Doc Holliday, marching to have it out with the Clanton gang at thirty paces," the grim gamblers of Tombstone, a lynching re-enacted for tourists (there's a harness under the victim's shirt), etc., etc. The grinning camera-pointing tourists make these re-enactment pictures a savage and subtle satire.

In one of those fraternal ambushes peculiar to Time Inc., *Time* (March 30) cuts the ground from under *Life* with a cover story on TV Westerns. This proved that *Time* is more virile than *Life*. It was written in the new, arduously awful *Time* style that would have made the old managing editors throw up:

"The networks have saddled up no fewer than 35 of the bangtail brigade. . . . Every wring-tailed old oat snorter they could rustle. . . . Perseus of the purple sage. . . . Smokewagon Siegfried. . . . Cactus-happy. . . . Chaparral clichés. . . . Hasty passel of horse operators. . . . Jump like a bronc with a bellyful of bedsprings. . . ." Etc. Not a word of this can be checked. It is also very fatiguing to read, and must be agony to write.

*Life's* thing about the gun-fight "at thirty paces" collides heavily with *Time's* statement that the Colt pistol of the time was not accurate beyond twenty feet. *Time* is right: the hand-gun couldn't hit a horse at twenty-five feet, except by accident, and in that famous fight Doc Holliday carried a shotgun.

The original function of the six-shooter in the clumsy holster was to shoot wolves and coyotes from horseback. It was of no use at a poker table where it required two fatal seconds to get out, up and level. Meanwhile the gambler took a split second to pick his derringer, carrying a big bullet, out of his sleeve or shirt-front and blow a hole in the bold cowboy. Most of these murders were transacted on gambler's terrain. But the holstered gun, as a visible insigne of virility, infatuated the cowboys and the cruder gunmen, as it has the TV audience.

The "walk-down" in the West was simply bad-tempered bluff-calling, like a crude duel. A man at a hundred feet could draw his gun and start firing. The other man had the choice of running away or walking up, returning the fire. The noise was splendid. Everybody was scared. At about twenty feet, somebody got hit. The custom did not contribute much to the winning of the West.

POSSIBLY the two greatest gunfighters of that decade and a half were Doc Holliday, the gambler, and Wyatt Earp, neither ostentatiously virile. (*Time's* nominee is a Texan, Wes Hardin, who was.) Both died in bed, Earp of sheer old age and decrepitude, Doc at thirty-five of tuberculosis, drinking and laughing to the end. Their secret was that they knew the limitations of hand-guns, were incredibly suspicious and mean-minded men, had lightning reflexes, couldn't get drunk and stayed cold even in a rage. Holliday's cursing seemed to improve his shooting. But most of his killing was at eight feet across a poker table against helpless virilities like the TV actors with the holstered hardware. Doc was six feet tall but weighed only about 115 pounds. He dressed very neatly in black and was a qualified dentist.

A hand-gun, then and now, is an inefficient weapon except at very short range. A good pitcher can throw a baseball more accurately and effectively at middle-range than a fair pistoleer can fire quickly. (This might be an idea for a TV duel.) But even at close-work gunfighting, a holstered hand-gun is poor. According to experts like Brooks Mandell, a man drawing such a gun can be disabled by a good commando. (At least, Mandell demonstrated it to me.) Possibly policemen should wear a small gun in the shirt-front or sleeve as Doc Holliday did and, I gather, Paladin does on TV. The holstered gun may make a man feel important but it is of no use against a man who is either too close or too far away.

It should be evident that in any conceivable struggle against tyranny, native or foreign, the citizenry need not rely on hand-guns. The Western on TV in the thirty million homes gives us a very bum steer as to either virility or guns. It is not especially virile to kill a man; it is merely a skilled operation based on the proved ballistic characteristic of the weapon. And the less virile weapon may very well be the more effective gun.



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# Uses of the Past: Angus Wilson

*THE MIDDLE AGE OF MRS. ELIOT.* By Angus Wilson. Viking Press. 439 pp. $4.95.

***R. J. Kaufmann***

ANGUS WILSON is a writer to be taken seriously. He takes himself seriously — I don't mean he revers himself — and behind his variously refracted up-to-dateness in matters cultural there is a stark and purposive mind dedicated to truth of a kind very distant from Bloomsbury. It is now exactly ten years since Wilson's first book of short stories, *The Wrong Set*, displayed his connoisseur's appreciation of every gradation of selfishness, aggression and incipient hysteria. He showed then (and has continued to show through two more books of short stories, a play, a book on Zola and now three novels) that he can write with so remarkable an assimilation to moments of histrionic self-indulgence in others as to seem uncanny — like the ventriloquism of some hyper-civilized shaman. His sophistication and the unusual extent and variety of his precisely held knowledge is as comforting a recommendation of his authority in fiction as it might be disconcerting in the drawing room. He is not a pedant, as Joyce or Mann sometimes are, though there is a lurking sense that he feels a constant, barely resistible impulse to "set things straight." Acceding to the rather depressed tempo of normal existence evidently calls forth from Wilson much the same heroic attempts at patience as is the habit of the saint. His intelligence is so strong and so strongly propelled by an active hostility toward the poor show put up by routine humankind that he tends at times to run right-through his characters and emerge empty-handed or with their scalp rather than with the sense of their private ethos. In short, his eye for falsity is so keen and his will to expose it so persevering that it is hard for him to find the deeper repose in the consciences of others which great novel-writing demands. The "set question" with Wilson is whether his type of fictional attack can last the route of full-scale novels.

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*The Middle Age of Mrs. Eliot*, his new novel, is good. Wilson *is* a good writer. Confronted with what is obviously a major effort, one that directly evokes the great English studies of female sensibility by Jane Austen, George Eliot and Henry James and thereby challenges comparison with them, we must ask: Just how good is he? What is Wilson's stature? In a time when many novelists have dived beneath the confusing welter of social change and sought every picaresque excuse to avoid ordering their material, Wilson, quite consciously, takes up the almost abandoned stance of the great Victorian novelists, tries to orchestrate his fiction for a wide range of types and has the resources to provide a rich background of relevant comment on the public moral order.

CLEARLY, Wilson is trying "to make sense of things" in *Mrs. Eliot*. The book is a study of a sister's and brother's fight for health and identity; very empirical, very consecutive, very English *and* a contribution to *lebensphilosophie* — an escaping from a dead world of stifling "life-lies" toward a viable, humanly adequate morality. A surprising thing is that Wilson, the most cultivated and sophisticatedly intellectual of his generation of novelists, is as earnest as the novice American transmuting his autobiography into fiction. And Wilson has the same aim — to discover and to show the concrete, existential roots and setting for *living a meaningful life*. Angus Wilson (like many of his younger British contemporaries but more so) is part of a resurgent but offset Puritanism which is trying to decide its own relevance to British life. Its moral canons are austere, even vindictively severe, no matter how indirect. Its politics tend to be leftish but quietistic. Its social preferences are not so much anti-material as suspicious of too-readily-acquired goods. It prefers Nature at the same time that it protests against Wordsworthian retreats from the assertions of modern life. Above all it rests upon a sense of alienation from the *hybris* of nineteenth-century British affluence at the same time that, seeing Americans prosperously enjoying these same Victorian public attitudes, it experiences a guilty envy which provokes nostalgia for just those prior excesses. That is a complex set of moods, but it has a consistency discoverable by a good, analytical novelist interested in the involutions of cultural middle age.

From the first Angus Wilson has pursued the theme of the precise uses of the public and private past. It is behind his obsessive concern with the deadly failure of communication between parents and children. It forms the subject of the title story to his second collection, *Such Darling Dodos*. He skillfully ramifies virtually the same characters (outmoded humanitarian liberals in decline) into a very superior neo-Chekhovian play, *The Mulberry Bush. Hemlock and After*, his first novel, might as well be called *The Death of a Humanist*, for through the tragic figure of its hero, Bernard Sands, the failing, homosexual, great-man-novelist whose apparatus for weighing and articulating motive is turned back on himself, Wilson conducts a complexly sympathetic autopsy on a whole way of life. In his second novel, *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes*, the necessity to come to terms with the past is made the explicit plot. Wilson here holds an inquest into the intricate decorum of pretense in the life of a man who, while ostensibly making a career of reckoning with the past, has in fact denied it and selfishly avoided its consequences. The structure of the book is a *tour de force* of associative flashbacks rising unbidden, like a massive Freudian return of the repressed. The aim of this painful inquiry is quite literally health — the moral health which can release over-civilized men from the disease of self-enclosure and lovelessness. If Angus Wilson's career as a writer starts in savage vexation and seems at times circumscribed by a desperate sense of human futility, he has not permitted it to rest in despair but, almost by will alone, has pushed on toward the freedom of imaginative health.

THE first two novels are dramatic in structure. Having come to the novel from the short story, Wilson likes to enter his narrative at or near the point of climax and then use variations on the flashback to substantiate and clarify. This has become the orthodox, nearly stale, way of prosecuting longer narratives of any psychological pretensions. So it is significant that Wilson abandons it for a straight chronological presentation in *The Middle Age of Mrs. Eliot*. It is also typical of him that he should have documented his own change when, writing critically of Galsworthy a few



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years back, he pronounced, "Experiment in novel-writing no longer has freshness. Narrative, plot and the traditionally socially set characters, which to an earlier generation seemed so many strangling knots, now offer promise of a lost solidity and vigour." Technically, thematically and in the inner life of his main characters, Wilson's central concern is for the recovery of this "lost solidity and vigour." This quest unifies the conscientiously broad social world of his fiction, so that we may apply to him his own perspicacious words about Zola: "beneath the fierce attack on society, the novels have their roots in deep personal aspects of the author's life — aspects which find their answer in social analysis, because his own inner conflicts are directly related to the social conflicts of his own time." This is true of all three of Wilson's novels and especially fruitful in respect to his latest.

*The Middle Age of Mrs. Eliot* contains no technical virtuosities to distract us from Wilson's direct study of Meg Eliot, whose volcanically sudden loss of her husband occurred in her forty-third year. She was rich, childless and satisfied with her social skills, her decent conscience, the substantial success of her husband, her marriage and her cultivated, engaging self. Given her social frame, she is very nearly what she thinks herself to be — a splendid thing. Then, violently deprived of money, social position, and the largely unquestioned (though appreciated) support of her very solid husband, she is existentially reduced to an uncharactered "potential" again. The main plot of the novel is her "regrowing" of a self. It is no accident that the final, rehabilitory section is set in a plant nursery where, against a subdued and knowledgeable evocation of the movement of the seasons, her return to individual "solidity and vigour" is selflessly chronicled by Wilson.

I say this is the main plot, for the novel is enriched by a parallel plot. It is the story of Meg's brother, David, who also loses the great love of his life, his partner in the nursery, his collaborator in books, his hero and friend, Gordon Padget. Gordon dies of cancer, surrounded by the frustrated love of David and the others who have lived under the mild but certain tyranny of his charm and commanding intelligence. Wilson goes to some trouble to disarm conventional moral responses which would deplore David's homosexual love for Gordon and consequently see his loss as incommensurate to Meg's loss of a husband. He establishes David's ascetic temper and explicitly asserts the non-physical nature of his attachment to Gordon. David's relentless though gentle war on the assertions of the self, his rituals of self-denial, his vigilant suppression of outcroppings of joy, are deeply registered by Wilson. There is much sympathy here, and at times David, who is extremely intelligent in a reluctant way, is allowed to raise his private vision to the status of philosophical generality. When he does, he seems a direct choral commentator on the necessities of our time. "I think that passivity . . . is an entire way of living . . . in ages like the present one where violence and self-expression and complication of motive have become so great that we need a *détente* . . . a simmering down of human personality, of human achievement too, if you like, in order that we can start up again." This moral program rooted in the context of David's self-abnegating, stoical existence is offered, I think, as a direct truth by Wilson, though it is one he is willing to test in the last phase of the novel.

MEG and David suffer their losses early in the book. The body of the story daringly risks prolonged narrative anticlimax for the sake of an untrammeled study of deep changes in character. In the middle and least satisfactory part of the book, Meg Eliot runs through three reactions to her deprivation, each somewhat mechanically personified by her three closest friends. In sequence she affiliates with: a cheerful and shameless dipsomaniac satisfied to drift; a plucky, professional do-gooder; and a dedicated memory-keeper embittered by a loss she refuses (subconsciously) to admit. None of these expedients will do and Meg, after valiantly coping, suffers a major nervous breakdown. It takes all Wilson's considerable verbal tact and novelistic command to hold off bathos in this sequence. He is running so close to the wind which blows lachrymose bestsellers on feminine pluck into the high sea of gratifying sentiment that many an inappropriate tear will be shed at this point. Great will be the resentment that Meg is denied this splendid "victory in defeat" and carried on toward a harder-earned self-understanding.

The imaginatively richest part of the book is its terminal third which brings Meg and her brother together and allows them slowly to establish the mutual love that their childhood experience had largely frustrated and the vast differences of their mature choices (extremes of worldliness and unworldliness) made downright unlikely. Wilson's handling is subtle as he traces the jerky but persistent increase in their capacity to give to each other a happiness that had seemed quite gone into the past. This mutual enrichment seems believable and good, I think, given the extreme loneliness and the fear of rational dependency which is built into middle-class British society. They need each other and the reader feels a very positive relief as David is liberated from a vestal emotional paralysis and Meg from a kind of manic-depressive cycle of frenetic, unrooted gestures.

The conclusion is harder to accept. Granted that they should part (we note that so warm a brother-sister attachment would inevitably reintroduce strains


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which it had been entered upon to relieve), *need* the separation be accomplished to the tune of Meg's curtain lecture on the enervating and suspect nature of David's joy in the present — his grateful acceptance of music, landscape, company? "What I don't understand," Meg says, "is how you can confuse the real living peace that was in you for all your unhappiness, all your tight discipline and self-repression with the vegetable ease, the creeping lethargy that's gradually paralyzing you now that you're what you call happy." This sudden avalanche of Puritanism crushes poor David and carries him away from the wretched fate of contentment. I protest. I register this protest in the interest both of Wilson's art and anybody's morality. In the interest of morality, because one should learn better than to distrust repose and momentary surrender. One needn't be forever vigilant against being engulfed by maternal affections or swaddled by confining loyalties to others. Throughout his work, this excessive defensiveness, this reflex terror of things soft, seductive, fat or easy, has disfigured Wilson's detachment. Meg's fearful routing of a man of David's minute capacities for self-indulgent joy seems to me gratuitous, relating to fierce old Victorian gospels of work rather than to the world of the novel.

Wilson's art has advanced to a point where he no longer requires of himself that devouringly omniscient and total control of his characters that limits his earlier fiction. The greatest novelists have a kind of modesty and restraint that enables them to refrain from reductive judgments of what their characters *are* though they must judge what they *do*. Wilson almost masters this crucial distinction in *The Middle Age of Mrs. Eliot*. This substantial and important book seems to me a novel nearly liberated into fullness. Wilson appears to be the most professional of British writers, the most dedicated and yet, the most constrained. In *Mrs. Eliot* we see that he is a deeply personal writer whose *David Copperfield*, *Way of All Flesh* or *Sons and Lovers* could be a very great book.

To a degree this has happened to all of us; liberal or conservative, we have begun to look to the past rather than to the future for our Golden Age. If the predominant color of the 1890s "seems closer to black," as Faulkner says, it certainly was a darkness from within which the horizons were streaked with the bright colors of hope. It was, in many ways, an age of innocence during which Americans began to speak of "power," "strength" and "supremacy," not dreaming that in our day these words would seem as ashes in the mouth.

# Oblique Parallel

*POLITICS, REFORM AND EXPANSION, 1890-1900*. By Harold U. Faulkner. Harper and Bros. 312 pp. $5.

***Tom Brooks***

THE nineties, a poet has said, "were not really gay," but the image persists. Lillian Russell, "Diamond Jim" Brady, John "Bet-a-Million" Gates, the opulent Mrs. Astor queening it over the Four Hundred are among the wraith-like figures that beckon us back to a gaudy past.

Now Harold U. Faulkner, in *Politics, Reform and Expansion, 1890-1900*, reminds us that the America of that remarkable decade was more than New York City where the rapacious gathered to gamble on the stock exchange, or in Mr. Canfield's salon. In fact, the gaiety apparently reflected a certain hysteria in a restless decade which separated "not only two centuries but two eras in American history."

Historic parallels are most instructive when they are slightly askew, off just enough to encourage speculation. Obviously, a decade that encompasses the waxing and waning of agrarian reform, the "Debs' Rebellion," the Spanish American War, the Panic of 1893, is a rich period to mine for comparisons. And Faulkner has ably marshaled the facts, not in imaginative interpretation but in solid text-book fashion.

One comparison will do to establish my point. See how easily Eisenhower slips into the blank spaces in the following description of McKinley:

> Handsome, engaging, modest, courteous, and sincere,————was the ideal man to preside over a nation seeking to forget its troubles. ————was everybody's friend at a time when everybody needed a friend. He seemed to have no enemies, and the country was tired of Presidents who made too many enemies.

McKinley "frankly considered himself the agent of businessmen who, he believed, created prosperity," and cheerfully selected a cabinet, as did Eisenhower, reflecting these views. But it is here that the parallel goes instructively awry. It is hard to conceive of Eisenhower's Cabinet believing, as McKinley's did, that their world "represented the pinnacle of human progress." The difference, I think, lies in this: The business ideology of McKinley's day was conservative but it was not, as it is today, nostalgic; it looked forward to progress not backwards in history for its inspiration.

*TOM BROOKS is assistant labor editor on* Business Week.

# LONDON LETTER

***Bernard Bergonzi***

A MAJOR literary success of the last few months in Britain has been John Betjeman's *Collected Poems* [see *The Nation*, May 16], which has become a bestseller and has even been serialized in the *Daily Express*. This kind of success for poetry is so unusual as to be remarkable, but if one had tried to name a poet who might become suddenly fashionable, it wouldn't have been difficult to think of Betjeman. His poetry is wistful or humorous, and combines idiosyncratic but safe moral attitudes with traditional verse forms. Above all, it is intensely "English" in its subjects and feelings, and ministers to the insularity that prevails nowadays at all levels of English cultural life. Purely as an experiment, I would be interested to know what an American reader might make of Betjeman. Not very much, would be my guess, but he might start to get his bearings when he came upon the following couplet:

> That topic all-absorbing, as it was,
> Is now and ever shall be, to us —
> CLASS.

Here, I imagine, he would remember his traditional image of England — and I am using "England" advisedly, for much of what I have to say does not apply to Scotland — as a country nationally obsessed with class distinctions, and the social peculiarities that stem from them. This American image of English class-structure, so far as an Englishman can become aware of it

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from American novels, magazines and films is, of course, a caricature, but like many caricatures it is not a bad likeness. Class is still obsessively with us, and in a number of new ways as well as the old ones.

In fact, class as a subject for self-conscious discussion is itself a product of the partial dissolution of the older social patterns. The analogy here is with religion: in a wholly religious society, like those of medieval Europe, people might talk at length about God and the saints, but scarcely about religion, since they would hardly be aware of it as a separate subject. Religion as such only becomes interesting when belief has weakened. Similarly, in a society rigidly stratified on feudal lines, one would not be aware of class, which would be one of the unconsciously accepted categories of existence, but only of the different orders of society. Nor, of course, would one worry about class in a classless society. (It is a common English assumption that America is a good deal more "classless" than England: I leave it to American readers to disagree if they wish.) It is a long time since English society has been feudal, and it is equally far from being classless, so class does tend to get an inordinate amount of emphasis.

THE complexity of the English class structure has always offered fruitful opportunities for the novelist, as Henry James was rather sadly aware, and this is still true. Hence the fabulous success of John Braine's novel, *Room at the Top*, which is best described as a kind of immensely vulgarized *Le Rouge et le Noir*, set in postwar provincial England. Its odious hero, Joe Lampton, is concerned with class to an almost pathological degree. He combines with straightforward old-fashioned snobbery the sophisticated awareness of the modern advertising copywriter, where sex itself becomes part of the display of consumer goods that proclaim one's social position: "I wanted an Aston-Martin. I wanted a three-guinea linen shirt, I wanted a girl with a Riviera suntan — these were my rights, I felt, a signed and sealed legacy." Yet Joe is a traditional figure, insofar as he rises from obscure working-class origins to "the top" of commercial and social success by a ladder largely of his own making. His main resources are personal charm and unlimited unscrupulousness, and his success is finally assured by the time-honored device of marrying the boss's daughter. Formal education doesn't play any large part in his ascent.

But though social success can still be obtained in contemporary England by buccaneering of the Joe Lampton kind, one is much more likely to get it by climbing the educational ladder obligingly placed in position by a benevolent state. The Butler Education Act of 1944, though associated with a Conservative minister in Churchill's wartime coalition, was widely considered as embodying many of the ideals of the older generation of Socialist and radical educational reformers. For the first time, "equality of opportunity" became a basic plank in national educational policy. Opportunities for advanced secondary education and, if necessary, university entrance, were to be given to all children who could benefit by them. The reasons, to be sure, were not all idealistic: the planners were well aware that the need for a trained technological and administrative elite in the postwar world meant that the intellectual resources of the lower social strata would have to be heavily drawn on. This educational revolution — and it *was* a revolution — has blurred but by no means abolished the old social-educational pattern. The "public" schools (some American readers may need to be reminded that they are, in fact, extremely private) have continued to educate the sons of the rich, including the left-wing rich, in their role of "training camps for the ruling class," as Chesterton once called them. But nearly half the undergraduates at Oxford now come from working-class or lower middle-class homes, being supported by scholarships given by the state or local authorities. This may seem unremarkable to Americans, but it has meant considerable adjustment of English attitudes, and a number of interesting tensions have arisen.

The "scholarship boy" has become a familiar figure of recent mythology, and there is a graphic account of him in Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*. He is the boy from a working-class home who wins a scholarship to Oxford or Cambridge, and has to learn to live in the alien cultural world they represent. Most of them do in fact adjust, perhaps at the risk of suppressing their origins, and go on to become good organization men, lured on by consumer goods, like Braine's Joe Lampton, or the hero of an earlier but comparable novel, William Copper's *The Struggles of Albert Woods*. But inevitably there are failures, and these too have been reflected in recent literature, a little dramatized perhaps, but still recognizable. The scholarship boy who has failed to integrate himself socially has a lot to do with the cult of the angry young man, now mercifully beginning to fade at the edges.

In general, nearly fifteen years of educational "equality of opportunity" as exemplified in the Butler Act have proved extremely disillusioning to left-wing thinkers. Instead of the diversified but integrated society, based on a genuine recognition of human differences, for which they had hoped, it is becoming increasingly clear that, despite the tensions I have referred to, the traditional class structure is becoming transformed but certainly not abolished. The new elite who have risen by their I.Q.s and examination-passing ability are being gradually assimilated into the older elite who were already there because of the accidents of birth. But if the 1944 Act has opened doorways to those born in the lower social strata who happen to be clever, it has also meant a permanently depressed social and cultural position for those who happen not to be. This state of affairs, and the whole concept of the "educational ladder," has been increasingly attacked on the Left—though still not very much in official Labor Party circles—and most notably by Raymond Williams in his recent confused but suggestive book, *Culture and Society*. There Williams writes, "a stratified society based on merit is as objectionable . . . as a stratified society based on money or on birth." A similar position has been adopted, on a broader front, by the young neo-Marxist writers who run the *Universities and Left Review*, which was started in a modest way a few years ago by a group of graduates at Oxford, and has since had a remarkable success.

But the most sustained and provoc-


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ative treatment of the educational question occurs in a recent short book by the sociologist, Michael Young, *The Rise of the Meritocracy*, a quasi-utopian satire, which supposes that by the year 2033 England has become in every respect "a stratified society based on merit," where I.Q. is the only determining factor of social position. Not only are the brainy children of poor parents selected at an early age to join the elite, but the stupid children of the elite are themselves kicked down the ladder to the place their I.Q. fits them for, whether they like it or not. *The Rise of the Meritocracy* has had rather a poor press, and it is certainly not without its faults.

It tends to fall rather heavily between the two stools of full-scale utopian satire — for it deals with only a few aspects of the society of 2033—and a closely reasoned sociological essay. It is also open to the charge of extrapolating into the future only a few of the observable tendencies in contemporary English education. Nevertheless, the problem it discusses seems to me sufficiently acute to have been worth raising, even in the rather exaggerated form in which Young presents it. Clearly, there are some straws in the wind: it is often remarked that all the most able men at the annual Trades Union Congress are middle-aged, and that the capable and intelligent young workers who might have succeeded them have been skimmed off by the educational machine and are probably now in one of the professions.

YOUNG's own convictions, I imagine, are those that he attributes to the "Populists," a revolutionary group led by women intellectuals, who try to upset the established order of 2033: "The classless society would be one which both possessed and acted upon plural values. Were we to evaluate people, not only according to their intelligence and their education, their occupation and their power, but according to their kindliness and their courage, their sympathy and generosity, there could be no classes. . . . The classless society would also be the tolerant society, in which individual differences were actively encouraged as well as passively tolerated, in which full meaning was at last given to the dignity of man." This is a sentiment which would certainly be shared by Williams and Hoggart and the *Universities and Left Review* critics, and one which I find it hard not to sympathize with myself, despite a certain deep-rooted skepticism about the possibilities of human improvement. It recalls the splendid utopia described by William Morris in *News from Nowhere*, a work which, it so happens, I read for the first time soon after reading Young's book. Even if it represents an unattainable ideal, one would certainly do better to work towards it rather than against it.

Yet certain questions persist. *Why* is English society still so class-ridden, why do these feudal survivals obstinately live on in a technological age? What is there about the English animal that makes him inevitably place himself in relation to his fellows in some kind of hierarchical order that seems largely incomprehensible to outsiders? American readers, I imagine, would like an answer to these questions. I wish I could give them one.

# ART

## *Maurice Grosser*

*Paris*

THE Independents, which each spring precedes the *Salon du Printemps* in the Paris season, is now at the *Petit Palais*. The *Musée des Arts Decoratifs* is showing a magnificent display of English eighteenth-century furniture, and the seasonal extravagances of the Left Bank include a showing of luminous art objects made of blocks of ribbed and spotlighted glass, and a show of Negro-style sculpture crocheted out of starched rope by a real African Negro. The most talked-about shows in town, however, are the French pictures, from Géricault to Matisse, borrowed from Swiss collections; the Toulouse-Lautrecs on loan from Albi; and the exposition of photographs and documents assembled by Sylvia Beach, publisher of *Ulysses*, for the *Centre Cultural Americain*, to commemorate "The Nineteen-twenties; American Writers in Paris and their Friends."

From the point of view of painting, the most important of the three is the show from Switzerland. The small Swiss cities have extraordinary collections of the French masters. Baden is celebrated for its Cézannes, Winterthur for its Chardins, Van Goghs and Bonnards, Soleure for its Rouaults and Renoirs. Somewhere in the background of any fine collection a painter is generally to be found. Mary Cassatt, for instance, was a friend of the Havemeyers, Duchamp of the Arensburgs, Picasso of Gertrude Stein. Thus, it is not surprising to find the traces of a painter here. In 1903, the young Swiss, Charles Montag, had gone to study in Paris and there discovered Impressionism, not yet respectable in Paris, and in Switzerland completely unknown. In his enthusiasm for this new school, he bought as many pictures as he could afford and obliged his Swiss friends to do likewise. He also invited the painters to Switzerland and introduced them in person to their new collectors. Contrary to what one imagines, these pictures were no longer cheap. In 1910 Bonnard, at the age of thirty, was already selling for as high as $1,600, and $10,000 had recently been paid for a Cézanne. Montag, however, was well-connected and his friends were rich. The result, as can be seen from the present show, was a series of private collections of French nineteenth- and twentieth-century pictures almost without rival.

Seeing these unfamiliar pictures by

## Brown Mountain

(*From the Spanish of Rafael Alberti*)

So much sun on the war, suddenly there is so much brilliance
spread over valleys and hills by the cartload;
such rabid silence, such fierce gentleness
coming down on the oaks like a crime from the sky—

this being ignorant of death: this landscape:
their joint attempt at a dazzling light—
the snow that's lost itself, ecstatic, in the distance,
hours that pass ruffled by no thing;

all this gnaws at me, chews my foundations;
clarity's torn from my eyes, they are misted—
my mind is a cargo of tears, dynamite.
Solitude echoes and the sun breaks down.

GILBERT SORRENTINO



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such well-known painters somewhat revises one's ideas. The Romantic work of Géricault and Delacroix I found I passed by quickly. Corot seems more wonderful than ever, and Monet more important, as does Degas, with a fine red canvas of a woman bathing, and a full-length portrait of Mme. Camus, all in black, at the piano. The Cézanne landscapes, celebrated as they are, seem here less interesting, the colors heavy and clayey. Whereas his portraits are obviously the major pieces of the show — in particular one of the painter himself done in his early forties, in a flat black hat and heavy beard, and highlights on the cheekbone; and another of his sister with a fan, seated in a red upholstered chair. Both Bonnard and Vuillard come off well, as does Marquet with his simplified brushwork and beautiful color, and Utrillo's canvas of the Chartres cathedral demonstrates how wonderful a painter he could sometimes, unexpectedly, be. Most curious of all is the stature and weight the great Cubist work of 1911-1913 has now assumed. Twice in my rounds I tried to get near Picasso's *Violon au Café* and Braque's *Jouer de Violon* — both strict Cubist works in brown and tan — and both times the crowd before them was too thick to penetrate.

THE Lautrec show at the Musée Jacquemart-André — paintings, drawings, lithographs, posters, manuscripts, photographs and other relics loaned by the Museum of Albi and a few private collectors — has perhaps as its most interesting side the portrait it gives of the painter himself. Very few of his large, important paintings are shown. But among the hundred-odd works on view, there is little that is dull and practically nothing one has seen before. It is a very convincing display, both of the painter's mastery of the humane and of the decorative styles, and of his enormous charm as a man. Here are his school books, scribbled over with drawings and faces, letters to his mother in school-boy English. There are photographs of him along with his fellow students in art school, in fancy dress as a Japanese nobleman and as a choir boy, and even of him swimming in the nude. It is all in the best good humor, as if he were cheerfully accepting his deformity, without self-pity, as a preposterous and entertaining joke. His relation to the café-concert singers and the whorehouse personnel who figure so largely in these pictures seems to have been both impersonal and curiously domestic. He saw their character and style, but he painted them without glamour, not as a client bedazzled, but with the clear understanding and friendly mockery of a fellow professional. The many small and frequently unfinished works here shown, some of them painted on odd bits of cardboard, are even better evidence than the larger and more famous pieces of the easy accuracy of the painter's eye and of his enormous fecundity. He died too soon; thirty-seven is young for a painter. But then, he had no health. With little expectation of life, he was too hurried. To see it all he had to live too fast. Witness the most pathetic of the objects on display here — his hollow walking cane, made to contain two pints of brandy.

THE display at the *Centre Cultural Americain* which documents the American writers living in Paris in the twenties, is quite disturbing to someone like myself who knew that Paris of between the wars — when living there was cheap and books inexpensive to publish, when the little magazines flourished and American painters swarmed at Julien's and Colorossi's and all the well-known American composers of today were Nadia Boulanger's students. Here in the array of books, photographs and manuscripts are all the people one knew or used to see around the Quarter — Hemingway and Bob McAlmon, Gertrude Stein, poet and hostess, mentor and collector of the talented young, Djuna Barnes, Eugene Jolas, Man Ray, Joyce, Janet Flanner and Ezra Pound. Here is Sandy Calder (unfortunately without the bent-wire circus he used to animate) and Marcel Duchamp with his enigmatic jokes. Here even is his brown leather valise made to contain, in replica, the complete collection of his works — at the same time a portable museum and a traveling salesman's sample case. Here is angel-faced young George Antheil, the then wild boy of music, and Aaron Copland who showed up in Paris principally in summer, and Virgil Thomson who lived there, saying that if he had to starve, he preferred to do it where the food was good. It seems unbelievable that this should have already become history and legend. But the show is here to prove it.

# THEATRE and FILMS

## *Robert Hatch*

SINCE current domestic politics is unsuited to satire — on the principle that a sportsman does not shoot fish in a barrel — a most likely candidate for a mordant pen is the beat generation. It has the right credentials — it is pervasive, noisy, self-righteous and deluded. It is also sufficiently colorful and active to promise high dramatic efficiency. *The Nervous Set*, now at the Henry Miller, is theatre filling an obvious vacuum.

I might recommend going to it for the purpose of confirming this proposition that the zen hipsters are ripe for caricature. This small musical offers one or two characters, one or two scattered passages, and a line or so of dialogue that flash signals of life and wit, as street scenes sometimes flash drama through the windows of a fast train. But the promise is gone almost before it registers, and the play as a whole is the wasting of an opportunity.

*The Nervous Set*, a Greenwich Village morality, was first put together and performed in St. Louis. Its author, Jay Landesman, once lived in the Village and edited *Neurotica*. Presumably he has happy memories of the place (among other things, he met his wife, who wrote the lyrics for his play, in Washington Square) and one trouble with the production is that Landesman and his colleagues are moved at least as much by a generalized nostalgia for the tolerant grubbiness of Village life as by the particular grotesqueries of the beatniks. They do tend to overlap, but they are not the same — Joe Gould and Maxwell Bodenheim were not beat, though they might well have become so, if they had lived a little later or a little longer.

A much more serious fault, though, is that the show constantly vacillates be-


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tween satire and homily. The earnest young people of St. Louis are eager to spread the news that there is something amiss with the beat kick, and they lecture very solemnly to that point. The resulting lack of style is embarrassing; it is amateur, humorless and pretentious. It drove many viewers out of the theatre at the intermission and it signals a quick death for the project.

Before it dies, though, I hope it may light a satiric fire in some other theatrical minds. *The Nervous Set* by no means exhausts the subject (it scarcely suggests the subject). We need satire — no theatre prospers without it — and the beat generation is as good a target as we are presently apt to find.

WHY the Phoenix Theatre down on Second Avenue should be putting on a routinely lavish musical comedy is a modest mystery. Money, I suppose, and since I enjoy the general fare at the Phoenix I hope money results. But I wonder.

The kind of audience that goes for big, pseudo-knowing shows like this wants to pay top prices at theatres in the West Forties. People who adventure as far as the Lower East Side are looking for fresh ideas. They won't find any in *Once Upon a Mattress*.

What they will find is a relentlessly bright and toothy show, based on the legend of the princess and the pea and making all sorts of predictable fun at the expense of that innocent tale. They will also find Carol Burnett, still another energetic print from the Beatrice Lillie mold (the image gets fainter as the years go by). The music was written by Mary Rodgers, and I wouldn't mention that she is the daughter of Richard Rodgers except that she here enjoys the assistance of three orchestrators, an entourage which puts her in a special class as a young unknown. The songs and the score sound just great, but I didn't hear anyone whistling as the evening broke up.

The book is also a three-man collaboration, but it is less important than the settings and costumes by William and Jean Eckhart, who were evidently told to spare no expense in producing a medieval atmosphere as pretty as a Barricini candy box. George Abbott put a fast metronome to the show and it does move. It had better move uptown.

---

SOME months ago I complained of the Indian film *Pather Panchali* that no amount of tender poetry or camera delicacy could overcome the deficiency of a script empty of dramatic energy. I said that the inability of the chief characters to make any stand against trouble induced depression rather than involvement.

Now the sequel (second part of a trilogy) to that picture is on show and its excellence is a confirmation, I think, of my previous judgment. The look and method of *Aparajito* is the same as that of its predecessor, the same central characters continue and their problems are of the same order as before. But now there is a struggle. The little son has grown to young manhood; he proves to be a scholar of potential stature and he determines to free himself from the supine sweetness of religious beggary that his father represents. His task is made the more difficult because the father dies and the mother, degenerating through loneliness, makes a powerful call upon his affection. He could become a priest, all tradition and all instinct call on him to succor his adored mother. But he does not take the sanctioned solution — he goes back to school. I found the picture moving and dramatically important, and look forward to the next segment in this chronicle under Satyajit Ray's gentle, exquisitely perceptive direction.

IN HIS recent work, *The Roof*, Vittorio De Sica returns to the atmosphere of the Italian postwar film renaissance to which he contributed notably with *Bicycle Thief* and *Umberto D.* The days are dark, the nights are misty and the Romans are indefatigable in their rich rubble—earthy, proud, disputatious and passionate. No doubt, those were great times, but the theme was really limited and it is difficult to recapture it. *The Roof* is a good little picture — the title derives from the fact that if, in a night, you could build a squatters' hut and get a roof on it, the police next morning could not evict you — and it is made to a sure little formula. The young couple who must find a place to live before their child is born are very real and very beguiling; their bold race against time and the law is exciting. However, I found it too easy to confuse their plight and bearing with those of a succession of young lovers that the Italians have shown us, and the outcome of the all-night construction on the railroad embankment was never in doubt. Good style can also become routine.

IN A recent film, here called *Forbidden Fruit*, Fernandel made excellent use of a Simenon story on the old theme of the responsible husband swept off his feet by the excitement of a late-blooming illicit love. Now Jean Gabin and Brigitte Bardot tackle the same subject in *Love Is My Profession* with meagerly sordid results. Their yarn, also from Simenon, is treated by Claude Autant-Lara in a much more sophisticated manner than Verneuil employed for Fernandel's idyl. It is so sophisticated, in fact, that it does not matter very much.

I recognize that Gabin's successful lawyer is supposed to be acting out a role that has long since lost its charming novelty, and that Mlle. Bardot's street girl represents sex at so primitive a level that it can express itself only in clinical pantomime. It is quite accurate, therefore, to assume that their union would produce disaster. But without at least a spasm of joy, you can evoke little tragedy.

## "I"

Like acorns squirrels pelt upon a roof
Fall equally all praise and all reproof.
My spirit stands aloof.
My trial and error with its clamorous din
I view with faint chagrin
But own no kinship in.

We, in objective cases, covet, lust and lie
But the subjective "I"
Which we identify
Is as a stone cast in a sea of space
Whence widening circles reach a holy place
Of uncorrupted grace.

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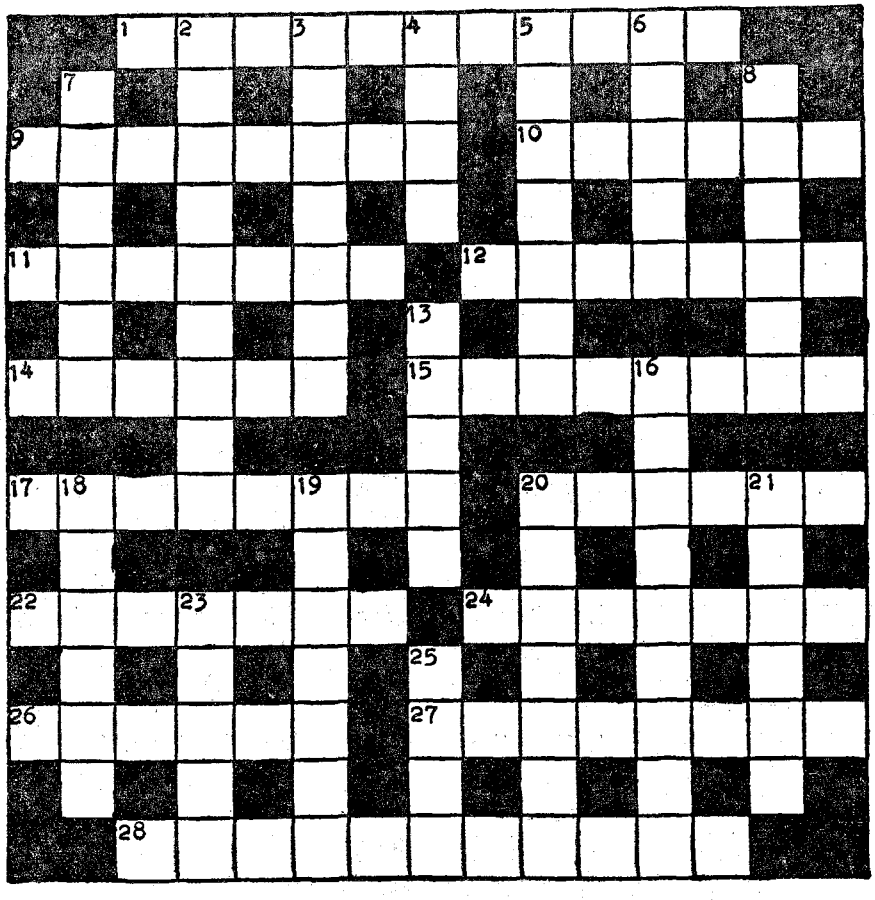
# Crossword Puzzle No. 821

**By FRANK W. LEWIS**



## ACROSS:

1 The man's in improper surroundings, but certainly not bursting out! (13)
9 The cable ran clustered with more than one across the Atlantic. (8)
10 Should such jokers be smooth operators? (6)
11 In time, I do a certain amount of needlework and stir up trouble. (7)
12 What Macbeth was, follows me in mine, possibly dangerous. (7)
14 Honorable indicter of the ambitious. (3-3)
15 and 2 down Did an Italian hope to find it the year 'round? (8, 6-3)
17 A legion's overthrown by power! (8)
20 Through habit, give thorough examination. (6)
22 See 4 down
24 Odd how the British Fleet enters the picture in balanced formation! (7)
26 In which might find the Cathedral of St. Anne? (6)
27 Put salt on this first to bring out a more primitive flavor. (8)
28 Seed clam? (11)

## DOWN:

2 See 15 across
3 Elevens. (7)
4 and 22 across Time for the point of 14 to be felt at the Capitol. (4, 2, 5)
5 French poet, novelist and dramatist. (7)
6 Score with a close pass? (5)
7 and 21 down In the case of deer, the last letter of 10 should come first. (6, 6)
8 So much skeleton and so little backbone! (6)
13 and 25 Opening with a prayer, and a bid on the right side. (9)
16 How can so mild a curse smear the country? (9)
18 Public disturbance. (6)
19 A tooth one should have no trouble cutting. (7)
20 Irishman's brawl with a Fenian? (7)
21 See 7 down
23 A bone of contention for Cockneys, or just an ungrammatical desire? (5)
25 See 13 down

### SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 820

ACROSS: 1 French Canadians; 9 Extradite; 10 and 11 Small change; 12 Planners; 14 Adjourns; 16 Arena; 17 Tesla; 18 Delights; 20 Bread pan; 21 Fencer; 24 Rhone; 25 Odometers; 26 Transformations. DOWN: 1 Fresco; 2 Extra; 3 Change of address; 4 Chin; 5 Needlessly; 6 Disentanglement; 7 Abasement; 8 Silesia; 13 Fra Diavolo; 15 Desdemona; 17 Taboret; 19 Trysts; 22 Credo; 23 Form.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# "THERE IS A KIND OF MADNESS..."

**WHAT ELSE BUT MADNESS** is it when we seek comfort in the calculation that one-half rather than three-fourths of our population would die in an all-out nuclear war?

**WHAT ELSE BUT MADNESS** is it when our hope for security lies in terror?

**WHAT ELSE BUT MADNESS** is it when each of two powerful countries insists that all agreements be to the sole advantage of it alone?

**WHAT ELSE BUT MADNESS** is it when we think that rearming Germany with nuclear weapons is a step toward peace?

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